

Application No. 10/681,341
Reply to the Office action of December 3, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Specification Objection

With respect to the Examiner's objection regarding the specification failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter, the specification has been amended to be consistent with the language of the claims as suggested by the Examiner. Particularly, paragraph [0023] has been amended to include the "integrally formed" language of independent Claims 1 and 7. No new subject matter has been added.

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-6 and 7-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Erdmann. Erdmann discloses a method and apparatus for forming a hardened contact surface on a shroud of a turbo machinery blade. Particularly, the hardened contact surface is formed by casting a blade 10 with a metal insert 38, 40 in a mold. Each insert 38, 40 is provided with a mounting member 26 projecting from a rear portion of a bearing member 22 and into the plane of the blade shroud 16 so that the material of which the blade 16 is made is cast about the projecting member 26 to firmly and mechanically hold the insert in the blade 16. As shown by Erdmann in FIGS. 1 and 2, the inserts 38, 40 are each cast into a central body portion of the blade shroud 16 which has a thickness greater than the rest of the shroud and which extends between the two oppositely directed wear surfaces 18, 20 of said same thickness. Thus, Erdmann discloses a substantially continuous central shroud body portion which extends between the wear surfaces 18, 20 and has the same thickness as the wear surfaces over the full length thereof. The face thickness of the flat wear surfaces 24 of the inserts is the same as the thickness of the cast central body portion extending in the plane of the shroud 20 from one bearing member to the other.

Accordingly, Erdmann clearly fails to teach the subject matter of the present invention as claimed. Reconsideration of the rejection of independent claims 1 and 7 is therefore respectfully anticipated. At least in view of their dependence on independent claims 1 and 7, dependent claims 2-6 and 8-16 are similarly believed to be novel in view of Erdmann and reconsideration of their rejection is therefore also anticipated.

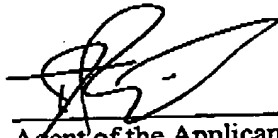
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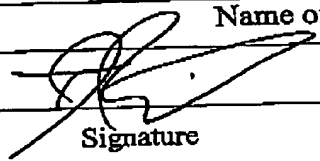
Applicant notes with thanks that Claim 17 was allowed and that all other previous rejections were withdrawn.

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully,

August 25, 2005
Date


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